# UNDERSTANDING AFGHANISTAN

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SHAHMAHMOOD MIAKHEL

**Shahmahmood Miakhel** was the First Deputy/Acting Minister of Defense of Afghanistan (July 2020 to March 2021) and the Governor of Nangarhar (Feb 2019 to July 2020), where he oversaw military operations, governance improvements, and development projects, including the defeat of ISIS-K in the region.

Previously, Mr. Miakhel was the Country Director for Afghanistan programs at USIP (2009-2019) and held various senior roles with the U.N. Assistance Mission in Afghanistan and the Afghan government. He has also worked as a journalist and with international aid organizations.

A native of Afghanistan, Miakhel participated in significant national and international dialogues and published extensively on governance and security. He holds a B.A. and M.A. in Political Science from Bircham International University, Spain, and completed fellowships at Stanford University and Harvard Kennedy School.